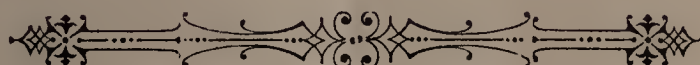


**WILLINGTON QUAY**

Urban District Council.



**REPORT**

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE YEAR 1895.



Printed by Thos. Robinson & Co., Printers, Ormonde Street, Jarrow.



**WILLINGTON QUAY**

Urban District Council.



**R E P O R T**

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE YEAR 1895.



Printed by Thos. Robinson & Co., Printers, Ormonde Street, Jarrow.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30279136>

TO THE

Willington Quay Urban District Council.



GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Report for the year ended December 31st, 1895, for the District of Willington Quay, which now, (since January 1st, 1895), includes the old sanitary district of Howdon-on-Tyne.

**MORTALITY.**

**General Mortality.** During the whole of the year 148 deaths (80 males, 68 females), were registered.

Estimating the population of the combined districts at 7950, this gives a death-rate of 18·6 per 1,000. The following table compares the death rates for the last ten years with those of the large English town districts.

**Annual Death-rates per 1,000 from all causes during the years 1886—1895.**

	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	Mean of 10 years. 1886-95
Willington Quay.	14·6	11·8	19·1	17·6	18·6	18·1	16·0	11·7	13·6	18·6	16·0
Large English Town Districts.	19·9	18·9	18·4	18·7	19·5	21·0	18·8	19·1	16·0	18·8	18·9



The death-rate for 1895 is a moderate one, being 0.2 below the average of the large English town districts.

At the end of this report will be found a tabulated form, in which the deaths are classified according to ages and diseases.

**Mortality among Children.**—Seventy-seven deaths occurred in children under 5 years, this being equal to a percentage of 52.1; in the preceding year the number was 38, or a percentage of 41.3. It will thus be seen that more than half of the deaths occurred in young children.

The excessive mortality among young children, not only in this district but all over Great Britain, is a problem which causes the gravest anxiety to Sanitarians, principally, because, by far the larger number of deaths is due to preventable diseases and that, nevertheless, little can be done by the health authorities, under the present conditions, to remedy the evil. The causes, so far as this district is concerned, are in my opinion three; 1, the improper feeding of infants; 2, improper and insufficient clothing, and undue exposure to cold; 3, the great carelessness on the part of parents in the case of infectious diseases, which, by the way, are considered by most people as necessary evils. I am afraid that the wretched practice of insuring young children's lives for comparatively large sums of money, has a good deal to do with this melancholy state of affairs, and the sooner legislation steps in to do away with this objectionable system, or at any rate to modify it to such an extent as to prevent it from being a profit to the parents, the better it will be for the welfare of the poor children.

Infant mortality, measured by the proportion of deaths under one year to births registered, was equal to 170 per 1,000, as against 112 for the preceding year, and 176 for the large English town districts. Taking the mean for the last 10 years we get a rate of 115; this means that, on an average, of every 100 children born in this district, 11 die, before they are one year old.

**Mortality above 65 Years** Twenty-five deaths occurred above 65 years, being 16.9 per cent. of the whole number.

**Mortality from Seven Principal Zymotic Diseases.** These diseases which include : Small pox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping-Cough, Fevers and Diarrhœa, have caused 18 deaths, or 12·2 per cent., the number in the preceding year being 7, percentage 7·6.

The Zymotic Death Rate for this year, therefore, is 2·26, as against 1·03 for the preceding year, and 0·60 for the year 1893, the rate for the 67 large English town districts being 2·41. Measles caused 12 deaths ; Typhoid Fever and Diarrhœa each 3.

The Zymotic Rate, as will be seen, is slightly below that of the 67 large English town districts.

The following table shows the relative mortality from each of the above-mentioned Zymotic Diseases in this district, and in the 67 large English town districts.

**Annual Death-rates per 1,000 from several Zymotic Diseases during the year 1895.**

	Meas-les.	Scarlet Fever.	Diph-theria.	Whoop-ing Cough.	Fevers	Diarr-hœa.	General Zymotic Rate 1895	Mean of 10 years 1886-95.
Willington Quay.	1·51	0·00	0·00	0·00	0·37	0·37	2·26	1·55
Large English Town Districts.	0·37	0·15	0·23	0·31	0·21	1·12	2·41	2·17

**Mortality from other Causes.** Diseases of the Respiratory Organs including Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy, caused 24 deaths ; Phthisis, 13 ; Heart Diseases, 8 ; Injuries, 2.

### Summary of Mortality Percentages.

Zymotic Diseases	12·2 per cent.	Under 1 year	32·5 per cent.
Phthisis	8·7 „	1 and under 5 years	19·6 „
Respiratory Diseases	16·2 „	5 „ 15 „	7·4 „
Heart Diseases	5·4 „	15 „ 25 „	4·7 „
Injuries	2·0 „	25 „ 65 „	18·9 „
All other Diseases	55·4 „	Above 65 years	16·9 „

### Mortality Classified according to Localities.

Brunton St.	6	Church St.	5	Nelson St.	10
Chapel St.	5	Stephenson St.	13	Philipson St.	2
Dock St.	2	Tyne St.	1	Hodgson St.	8
Wagon Stairs	1	Palmer's Terr.	16	Headlam St.	8
Main St.	2	Carlyle St.	2	Western Rd.	4
West St.	1	Boundary St.	1	Hardy's Cottages	1
Tyne Comm'rs W'ks	1	Potter St.	8	Rosehill Rd.	4
George St.	20	Tyne Ship-bd. Yard	1	St. Mary's Terr.	1
Bewicke St.	12	Gas Lane	1	Ravensworth St.	12

### BIRTHS.

The births for the year number 282 (133 males, 149 females), equal to a birth-rate of 35.4 per 1,000, as against 31.4 for the preceding year, and 31.3 for the 67 large English town districts. The gain to the population (*i.e.* the excess of births over deaths) of this district is therefore 134.

### NEW CASES OF SICKNESS.

**Small-pox.** I am glad to say that since June 1883, no cases of this disease have occurred.

**Measles.** This disease was slightly prevalent in January; a few cases were reported in the months of February and March. In April it became very prevalent in the western part of the district, 3 deaths occurring during that month. It then gradually spread to the centre and eastern portions during the months of April and June, when 6 cases ended fatally. At the beginning of the latter month a large number of cases occurred among the scholars of the Stephenson and Addison Potter Schools and it would probably have been advisable to close these schools but for the fact that the summer holidays were quite near. In order to discuss this question I attended a special meeting of the School Board, but for the reason just mentioned, it was considered unnecessary to take any steps in that direction. The disease declined rapidly during the next two months, although three more deaths were caused by it, and at the beginning of September it had practically disappeared.



**Scarlet Fever.** One case occurred in February in Rosehill Road ; one in March in Church Street ; one in April in Hodgson Street ; one in May in Nelson Street. Two cases, which were notified in September, one in Stephenson Street, the other in Tyne Street, were sent to the Hospital. In each of the latter two cases, the families, from which they were removed, occupied only two rooms, and as there were numerous children in each family, it would have been impossible, if they had remained at home, to have prevented the spread of the disease by means of isolation. The fact, therefore, that no more cases were reported in these streets, fully demonstrates the great value of an Infectious Hospital.

Isolation Hospitals are especially useful in the case of Scarlet Fever a disease which is infectious for 6 or 8 weeks, sometimes even for a longer period. In the final disinfection of a dwelling, in which this disease has occurred, it is important that all bedding and thick materials should be sent away to be treated by the steam disinfecter, that the paper should be stripped off the walls and burned, after which the process may be completed by means of sulphur fumigation. In speaking of wall-papers it will perhaps not be out of place to express my strong condemnation of a custom, which I am sure prevails very extensively, namely of putting new papers on walls, without removing the old ones ; I have frequently seen ten or twelve layers of paper on old walls, forming a thick covering, which not only harbours dirt and infection, but which may conceal grave sanitary defects in the walls themselves.

In November another case, in George Street, was notified, this was also removed to the Hospital.

**Typhoid Fever.** In January two cases were reported. The first case in Hodgson Street, proved fatal, the second one occurred in a cottage, belonging to the Globe property in Dock Street. The Sanitary condition of this property was at that time far from satisfactory ; it has since then, however, been improved to a certain extent as will be seen further on in the report. In June a case in a dwelling near the Shipwright's Arms was notified. The patient was removed to the

Hospital, and the owner of the house was served with a notice to repair the yard and ashpit, which were both faulty.

Another case, which occurred in the same house, 4 weeks after, was also removed to the Hospital. In September, two cases came to my knowledge, one in George Street, the other in Palmer Terrace. Sanitary defects were discovered in both instances, and notices were served upon the owners to remedy these. Two more cases, in the same house in George street, one of which terminated fatally, were reported shortly afterwards. In October, and the beginning of December, three cases of Typhoid Fever (one fatal) occurred on the west side of Ravensworth Street; the Sanitary Inspector and I made a careful inspection of that street, but did not discover any serious defects; we found evidence, however, of the dirty and careless habits of some of the inhabitants; vegetable refuse and other rubbish having been continually deposited in the back lanes, and some of the yards and ash-closets had been neglected.

**Whooping-Cough.** Very few cases have come to my knowledge, no deaths having been caused by this disease.

**Diphtheria.** One case was notified in October. It occurred in the second arch in Chapel Street, in a block of old houses, all in a more or less insanitary condition. Reference will be made to these again in the last portion of this report.

**Diarrhoea** was prevalent during the autumn months, but not to a dangerous extent. Three deaths were caused by it.

**Influenza.** This disease commenced in February, and was very prevalent in the two following months, three cases being fatal. After the beginning of May only a few cases occurred.

## **SANITARY WORK.**

**Scavenging.** The ash-pits and ash-closets have been attended to in a fairly satisfactory manner. The Scavengers, however, did not make sufficient use of disinfectants, in their various cleansing operations. In the case of large middens, especially, it is important, that the back street should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after the contents have been removed.

**Inspections and Nuisances.** The Sanitary inspector and I have made several house-to-house inspections during the course of the year. Numerous notices have been sent to owners of property to abate nuisances and to repair defective dwellings. I am glad to say that the large open middens are gradually disappearing, and I trust that the time may not be far distant, when they will be reckoned as things of the past. Of the fact that they are all dangerous to health, I am perfectly convinced ; 1st, because they cannot be emptied frequently, 2nd, because the night-soil lies in one part of the midden, the ashes in another, and that, in this way, the contents do not get properly mixed, the de-odorising properties of the ashes thus not being properly utilised; 3rd, because the contents are exposed alternately to the influence of rain and sunshine, the conditions of moisture and heat thus brought about being most favourable to the development of a dangerous degree of fermentation and putrefaction. The small ash-closets, if constructed according to the plan adopted by the Council, are a considerable improvement provided that they are properly used. If, however, careless people throw slop-water into them, (as is frequently done), they are liable to become a nuisance, and it is to be hoped that it will be possible before long to have some of the delinquents punished as an example to others.

With regard to the Willington Gut nuisance, it is greatly to be regretted, that the new sewerage scheme has made such slow progress, and as there is little prospect of the work being completed for at least eight months, it may be necessary, if next summer should be hotter than usual, to consider the advisability of adopting some temporary measures as suggested in my last report.

I am sorry to say, that there are still a great many houses, which are in a more or less insanitary condition. This is especially the case in those streets which formerly comprised the Howdon-on-Tyne district.

Keelman's Row has been considerably improved this year ; the houses have been re-roofed, the rooms now are dry, a number of good cement floors have been put down, and the back wall has been cemented. If the owner could be induced to remove the ash-closets to the back of the premises, and to plaster the front wall, the property might be considered in a satisfactory condition.



I regret that I cannot report so favourably on the block of houses at the top of Ravensworth Street. All the old dilapidated outside stairs have, it is true, been removed, and the front wall plastered, so that the external appearance is much better, but little has been done to remedy the insanitary condition existing inside the houses. The roof has merely been patched up, consequently the rooms are still damp and uninhabitable.

On the east side of Hodgson Street about half of the ashpits have been converted into ash-closets, and I have reason to believe, that the remaining ones will be dealt with in a similar manner before long. This will be a great improvement, as there has been considerable difficulty in cleaning out the old ashpits, owing to the fact that many of them were below the level of the street.

Nelson Street and Potter Street have shewn a certain amount of improvement this year, a few yards have been cemented and several new ash-closets have been added; there are, however, a few yards which are in a bad state, especially in the latter street.

With regard to Palmer's Terrace, I have the same old story to tell, There has again been a great deal of sickness and a heavy mortality in the row of houses on the south side between the Alma steps and the Ballast Hill. On account of the small size of the yards, and the impossibility of enlarging these without encroaching upon the street, the adoption of water-closets is the only plan which holds out any prospect of getting rid of the present unhealthy conditions.

Several improvements have been made in Stephenson Street; the Alma Hotel has been entirely rebuilt, the houses next to it provided with new yards and ash-closets. All the open ash-pits have now, with one solitary exception, disappeared in this street, the result being, that more yard space has been obtained in many places where such was greatly needed. The Ship Launch Inn is still in the same dilapidated state, and it will be necessary to take further action in this case without delay, as the notice served by the Council has been totally disregarded.



A number of the streets forming part of the old Howdon district were, at my request, inspected by the Sanitary Committee at the commencement of the year. As the result of this inspection, a number of notices were sent out, and in three instances the suggestions of the Committee have been carried out satisfactorily, namely : in the case of the Black Bull Inn, the Ship Inn, and the Royal Oak Inn, substantial improvements having been made in these three cases by cementing yards, repairing roofs, improving the water-supply, and making certain structural alterations.

There are, however, a great many old houses in Chapel street, Brunton street, Main street, Dock street, and Wagon Stairs which to a greater or lesser extent, are unfit for habitation. Many of the rooms in these houses are damp, owing to faulty roofs and walls, some are insufficiently lighted, others have defective floors and ceilings. Several of the houses have been so sub-divided into tenements by the blocking up of doors, which communicated between front and back rooms, as to entirely prevent through ventilation. To make matters worse, the cheap rents have attracted a class of people who evidently regard cleanliness as an abomination, soap and water as unnecessary luxuries of civilization.

Among the worst of these houses, I may mention the property at the second arch in Chapel street, the houses on the Wagon Stairs, the Post Office Stairs and the Brewery Cottages.

It will be advisable to deal with these old places at an early date ; notices should be served upon the owners to thoroughly repair the dwellings, to provide sufficient yard accommodation, and to do away with the back-to-back rooms so as to secure through ventilation, and in the case where this cannot be done in a satisfactory manner, the dwellings should be closed altogether.

The old Globe property in Dock Street, which for many years caused so much trouble to the late Howdon Local Board, on account of its insanitary state, has been a nuisance this year, principally owing to the filthy condition of the yards, ash-closets and passages. At the last inspection all the tenants were threatened with Police Court proceed-

ings and the owner was also communicated with on the subject. Since then the premises have been kept in a much cleaner condition, and a nuisance, caused by the deposit of rubbish in the back lane, has, through a slight structural alteration in the ash-closets, been abated. The roof has been repaired, and the rooms now are fairly dry, but the building is so old, that, even with continual repairing, it will be difficult to keep the place in a sanitary condition.

The Cowsheds, Dairies, Milkshops and Slaughter-houses have all been inspected regularly, and were found in a fairly good condition.

**Food Analysis.** Samples of milk, lard etc., taken by the Chief-Inspector under the Food and Drugs Act, were certified by the County Analyst to be genuine.

**Water Supply.** The constant service from the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company has been good throughout the whole of the year. Complaints, however, have been made, that, on several occasions, the supply was stopped without warning for several hours, presumably for repairs. In such cases, much inconvenience would be avoided, if the Water Company could be prevailed upon, whenever possible, to give notice to the inhabitants some time beforehand.

I am,

Your Obedient Servant,

C. T. U. BABST.



During the Year 1895, in the Willington Quay Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.









